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PEEL WEEKLY NEWS

MISSISSAUGA | BRAMPTON | CALEDON

Jan. 21, 2021

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at Canada Post
facility positive
for COVID

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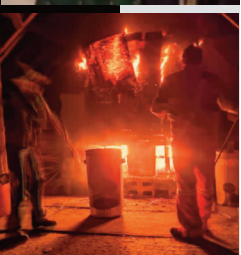
Pandemic event
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Wellspring of a
Creative
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by Alex Gregory

No charges to be laid in Francique shooting: SIU

A new report by the province's Special Investigations Unit, released Wednesday afternoon, states that there are no reasonable grounds to charge the subject officer at the centre of the police-involved shooting of Jamal Francique (above), who died from injuries sustained during an incident on Jan. 7, 2020. (Submitted/Francique Family)

Over a year after a death that shocked a community, police have cleared the officers at the centre of a SIU investigation.

The province's Special Investigations Unit released a report Wednesday indicating that there were no reasonable grounds to charge a Peel Police officer involved in the shooting of 28 year-old Jamal Francique on Jan. 7, 2020, during an incident that occurred as officers tried to arrest him in front of his family home.

According to the SIU report, written by director Joseph Martino, officers from Peel Police's Street Level Organized Crime Unit planned to arrest Francique in front of

his Mississauga home after conducting ongoing surveillance due to apparent information that Francique had breached bail conditions, was trafficking drugs and had access to a firearm.

During the attempted arrest, Francique got into his car and managed to reverse out of his driveway, despite attempts to impede him with a deflation device placed under his tires and multiple units stationed in the area. In the ensuing confrontation, Francique reportedly accelerated into a police cruiser and nearly hit an officer before attempting to leave the area, leading said officer to fire four rounds in the direction of the driver's seat. Francique was

subsequent struck in the head, and remained on life support until Jan. 10, when he succumbed to his injuries.

According to the report, police did not directly engage Francique because they feared that he was armed -- a later search of his vehicle revealed a semi-automatic pistol inside the vehicle.

Martino said that the officer who shot Francique, who has not been identified publicly, feared an "imminent risk" to his safety during the incident, which was the reason why he discharged his firearm -- but that wasn't good enough for the lawyer representing Francique's family.

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Mail facility impacted as 121 employees test positive for COVID

by Alex Gregory

Residents in Mississauga are unlikely to hear “the postman ring twice” this week, as a mail facility is undergoing major testing after a COVID-19 outbreak.

Officials at Canada Post revealed Wednesday evening that Peel Public Health is now testing numerous employees at its Dixie Road sorting facility after a major outbreak, with 121 employees testing positive for COVID within the past three weeks.

Testing is being offered voluntarily at the site for employees, while all workers who tested positive for the virus being ordered to go into isolation, a company spokesper-

son said late Wednesday.

“The (facility) is central to our entire national delivery and processing network, and the safety measured we have implemented nationwide are having an impact on our delivery service,” spokesperson Phil Legault said Wednesday

evening regarding the facility, which is located near the corner of Dixie and Eglinton Avenue.

Peel Public Health began testing of affected employees Tuesday, but has not shut down the facility and will allow operations to continue, Legault confirmed. However, the impact of

testing is expected to make a dent in service levels, he confirmed.

“These measures, combined with record-breaking volumes, will continue to have an impact on service,” said Legault.

“Canada Post will continue to work with Peel Public Health and take their direc-

tion as we work to do our very best to keep our people and Canadians safe.”

A union representative with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers also confirmed to Peel Weekly News that it is working to ensure the safety of its employees, and will be working closely with Peel Public

Health to ensure “the health and safety of our members.”

Last year, the facility faces a similar outbreak, when eight employees were confirmed to have the virus in April, prompting “precautionary deep cleaning” of the facility, which employs more than 3,500 workers.



Community in shock as one left dead after Bolton shooting

Residents in the Harvest Moon Drive area witnessed a flurry of activity Monday afternoon after police cruisers responded after a shooting that left one victim dead

and another injured.

Caledon OPP said in a brief statement Tuesday that officers were called to the area around 12:30 p.m. Monday afternoon in response to re-

ports of gunshots, and discovered two male victims at a residence in the area.

One victim was pronounced dead at the scene, while the second victim

was sent to hospital with unknown injuries.

Neither the victims' names nor additional information regarding the incident has been revealed, though the area was shut down for several hours as officers investigated the property and surrounding area.

Anyone with additional information regarding the incident is asked to call Caledon OPP's Major Crime Unit at (905) 584-2241.



Staff looks for input on outdoor rinks after report

A community petition over the removal of a long-time outdoor rink has prompted the City of Mississauga to direct staff to investigate the matter further, councillors decided Wednesday during their regular meeting.

City staff were directed to bring back a report on the feasibility of adding outdoor refrigerated rinks in the city in response to the reaction over the redevelopment of the Burnhamthorpe Community Centre, which included plans to remove an outdoor covered rink.

As covered last week in peel Weekly News, local resident Joe Galati created a community petition to protest the demolition of the rink, attracting major interest and support from residents who requested that the rink, one of only three outdoor sites in the GTA, remain open.

City staff had previously stated that the rink was due to be removed due to the design of the project not being able to accommodate an outdoor rink.

Look for additional coverage on this story in next week's edition of Peel Weekly News.

STAY IN TOUCH

PEEL WEEKLY NEWS

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PEEL
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Peel ramps up vaccination schedule as province touts milestone

As Peel Region pushes for an acceleration of vaccinations throughout key sites, the province announced Tuesday that it had completed the first round of vaccinations at LTC homes throughout the region and surrounding areas.

Premier Doug Ford said Tuesday that Peel was one of four regions, along with Toronto, York and Windsor-Essex, to finish the first round of vaccinations on residents — as part of a push to target regions with the highest COVID-19 transmission rates in the province.

"We are making steady progress, but we will not rest until the residents and staff of every long-term

care home and all Ontarians have had the opportunity to get a vaccine," Ford said during a news conference. "Only then will we be able to get our lives back and return to normal."

The news comes as public health officials in Peel push for a community mass vaccination plan, with a proposal outlining key metrics and guidelines being approved Wednesday.

Peel's vaccination plan is aimed at getting community clinics up and running as soon as possible, with two clinics (located at Region of Peel facilities at 7120 Hurontario Street and 10 Peel Centre Drive) targeted to open early next month.

Three additional

locations, including Century Gardens Community Centre, Caledon East Community Complex and River Grove Community Centre are targeted to open this spring.

"(This) is a testament to the hard work and collaboration of our team with our many partners, all while continuing to support our broader pandemic response to help keep people safe," the region said in a statement last week.

As of Tuesday, 83,000 LTC residents, staff members and caregivers had been vaccinated with the first dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, though more work remains to stop community spread, said the

province's long-term care minister.

"We must remember that our long-term care homes are still at risk from community spread... it's important that all of us continue to stay home as much as possible and follow the public health measures so we can stay safe and save lives," said Minister Merilee Fullerton.

The province has also run into snags securing additional doses of the Pfizer vaccine, as the federal government revealed on Jan. 15 that production at the drugmaker's European production facility had been delayed, and that shipments of the vaccine would be reduced through February.

More must be done to protect the province's most vulnerable residents, representatives of the official opposition said last week.

"People are doing everything they can to stay home and keep people safe — but Peel families, including all the essential workers that live here — won't be able to solve this problem without more help," said Brampton North NDP MPP Kevin Yarde. "(The Premier) must provide the region with the vaccines we need to meet the demands of our population, and he needs to provide paid sick days, on-site workplace testing, and more isolation centres."

Family asks for accountability after police shooting

Continued from Pg 1

"(There is) a heavy reliance on bias leaning towards clearing police officers when admittedly directors comment on the fact that (they) could have done something different, yet still always rule in their favor," said Singh, who publicly represents the family.

The incident was one of several high-profile incidents involving police and members of the Black community, including the police-involved shooting of D'Andre Campbell in Aug. 2020 during

a confrontation in front of his family home. The incidents prompted community vigils and protests to bring attention to perceived imbalances in policing and arrests, with members of Francique's family continuing to fight for further investigation regarding the trend they see.

"This report has left my family in further disbelief in the SIU and the police force," Derek Francique, Jamal's father, said in a prepared statement Wednesday afternoon. "We do not want to leave our lives in your

hands, because instead of helping us and giving us a reason to feel safe, you leave the families in incomplete shambles."

Derek, who participated several vigils and protests at Peel Police properties last year, said that the family has still not received pertinent information about the case, and is requesting more accountability on the part of the force.

Peel Police Chief Nishan Duraipah, commenting on the matter Wednesday, told Peel Weekly News in a statement that, "Any time a life is lost due to

an interaction with police, it is a tragedy that all involved wish could have been averted. Family and loved ones are left behind with questions and the officers involved are forced to deal with the realities of the stress these outcomes cause."

Last year, protestors taped signs and threw red paint onto the windows and walls at 11 Division, located near the corner of Dundas and Erin Mills Parkway, in mid-December as part of an effort to raise concerns about the handling of cases in-

volving alleged police violence in the community, and requested criminal charges be brought against the officer involved in Francique's shooting, as well as Campbell and other high-profile cases. "Peel Regional Police has blood on its hands," members of a group calling themselves the Malton People's Movement said on Dec. 13. "These families have been waiting for answers, yet all they've received is empty promises and criminalization."

- With PWN Files

Opinion

Will Biden live up to everyone's expectations?

Surjit Singh
Flora

Column

Washington D.C. was on high alert Wednesday morning, with all 50 U.S. states on watch, as Joe Biden replaced Donald Trump as the 46th President of the United States.

As Biden became President, the world's eyes were focused on him and his working style.

On one hand, Americans have high hopes for him to deal with the COVID-19 epidemic, and for peace and improvement in the economic situation.

One thing for sure is that, with an end of the Trump era, Biden's cabinet must be knowledgeable, qualified people and key leadership positions.

He will show up to work early in the morning, listen to his advisors, read his daily briefings, attend meetings, and delegate tasks to the right people.

He will hold press conferences where he answers questions fairly consistently; none of the media will be accused of being fake or insulted.

He will have a staff member who sends official social media updates that are checked for accuracy and meet administration guidelines.

There won't be many of them - certainly not dozens in a single day. Tweets will never be in all caps.

From an international perspective, leaders worldwide are already trying to find ways to move forward with Biden.

All the global powers crave stability, and for the first time in four years, they might have a partner in the U.S. that uses influence rather than threats to achieve strategic goals.

Canada's relationship with the Trump administration can at best be called thorny. Trump said Canada was a potential threat when he cut off PPE supplies enroute to Canada, only to back down afterwards.

He is well documented at targeting Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who is about to be scammed following a G7 meeting.

Trump has imposed tariffs on Canada on steel and aluminum, which hurts Canada and

harms American manufacturers — some detained as alleged spies by the Chinese government in retaliation for ruling against Huawei.

In short, the Trump administration was not very popular with Canadians.

Former President Barack Obama has mentioned multiple times how PM Trudeau had a great relationship with him. Biden was Obama's vice president at the time.

This should suggest a return to friendly cooperative relationships, but it may be too much expectation, even hope.

Biden made it clear this week that he swears to nix the Keystone pipeline, a major Canadian multi-billion-dollar economic initiative.

Killing a pipeline can be risky, as many kilometres of pipes have already been laid and would have to be torn up.

But so far, news that leaked has indicated that Biden has pushed for plans to cancel the Keystone XL pipeline permit via executive action on his first day in office.

In short, that will not be healthy news for Canadians.

China wants to end the trade war started by Trump and lift sanctions on Chinese tech company Huawei in addition to U.S. sanctions and cuts on Chinese goods.

China is also keen to work with the United States on climate change and the COVID-19 epidemic.

Besides, China hopes that the administration of Joe Biden will play a more effective role in its interests in internal national security and human rights matters.

Countries in the Middle East expect the Biden administration to do more to improve relations between the Gulf states. They hope that under Biden,

the United States will take the same steps to improve relations in the Gulf, as it has taken in ties with Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

Some Gulf states fear that Biden could move in the direction of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. They hope to talk to other countries before taking any step in this direction and bringing them into confidence.

The Biden administration also expects these countries to play a positive role in human rights and refugee issues in Yemen and Syria.

Mexico hopes that Biden will change the immigration policy for Mexicans and give them relief.

Under current policies, thousands of people seeking asylum in the United States have to live in dangerous areas of Mexico on the U.S. border until their applications are processed.

Citizens of Latin America hope that Biden will impose strict sanctions against Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela. At the same time, the people's eyes here are on how Biden deals with Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who is considered a staunch supporter of Trump.

However, analysts believe that it will not be easy for Joe Biden to live up to everyone's expectations.



FEBRUARY 9, 2021

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Opinion

In a democratic society, what goes around comes around

by Vidya Gopaul

After what happened on Capitol Hill in the U.S. on Jan. 6, it shows that when people are angry, they do care whether it is a Democratic, Socialist or Communist government to protest against.

Whether the protest is justified or not is a very subjective opinion, and we'll let that be a discussion for another day.

I did not think that in this modern day and age, such a violent protest would have taken place in the United States Of America - a country that sets the example of how Democracy is implemented.

Such a vicious revolt would normally occur in some of the European, South American, Far Eastern or Middle Eastern countries.

Moreover, it is unfathomable to think that in a

country, one that calls itself the "land of the free," would have a massive barricade of security services, military troops and what seems like the entirety of Washington locked down for the inauguration of a free elected president by a democratic political system.

It is unthinkable.

The only spectators during that ceremony will be the 25,000 military troops and no public audience, who, by the way, ironically elected the president.

You would think of such a military-style inauguration in a communist country or in Baghdad, but not in the US.

But then again, times have changed.

When there is a conflict, both sides are at fault, and it does not matter who is right or who

is wrong.

In this case, both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party are at fault.

Since the day that Americans voted for a Republican President four years ago, the Democratic Party has been chasing him like a hound dog.

Day after day, month after month, they were criticizing what he said, accusing the Russian government of helping him win the election, and trying to impeach him multiple times, just to name a few instances.

To his last day, the Democrats did not let him go with peace. They will impeach him while he is gone from the White House.

That not only infuriated him, but enraged his supporters. When you see your leader is being harassed, hu-

miliated and let down every chance the opposition gets, that will for sure anger their supporters, regardless of whether that leader is a leader of a Democratic, Socialist or Communist country.

Also, it does matter whether that leader is good or bad or corrupt in the eyes of the public or the world - more than you think.

Just look around the world and look at the countless leaders who are ruthless, autocratic and dictatorial - and yet they have loyal supporters.

Take as an example the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, the President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, the President of China, Xi Jinping and the President of North Korea, Kim Jong-un; they all have loyal supporters.

In the eyes of the rest of the world, they are just ruthless leaders, but they do have faithful and steadfast supporters in their own country, regardless what you and I think of them.

Therefore, when the President of United States was troubled at every corner by the Democrats, his supporters, who also believed that the Democrats stole the election, then could not take it anymore and that led to the violent storming of Capitol Hill - an icon and symbol of true democracy.

The only way to resolve any dispute is to give all parties concerned the benefit of doubt to prove their cases.

You cannot just take your own side and say, "We are right and you are wrong." You can only push anyone

or any group so far.

There is a limit, and if that limit is crossed, violent incidents like the one at the Capitol Hill will happen over and over again, whether it is a Democratic, Communist or Socialist country.

Today, it is the Republicans who are crying foul, but tomorrow, it could be the Democrats who will be crying foul.

Do you remember when they tried to impeach the Democratic President, Bill Clinton?

All the Democrats were livid, angry and felt intimidated by the Republicans. His wife, Hillary Clinton accused the Republicans of playing conspiracy theory.

That's what I call -- politics!

In the great game of democracy, what goes around comes around.



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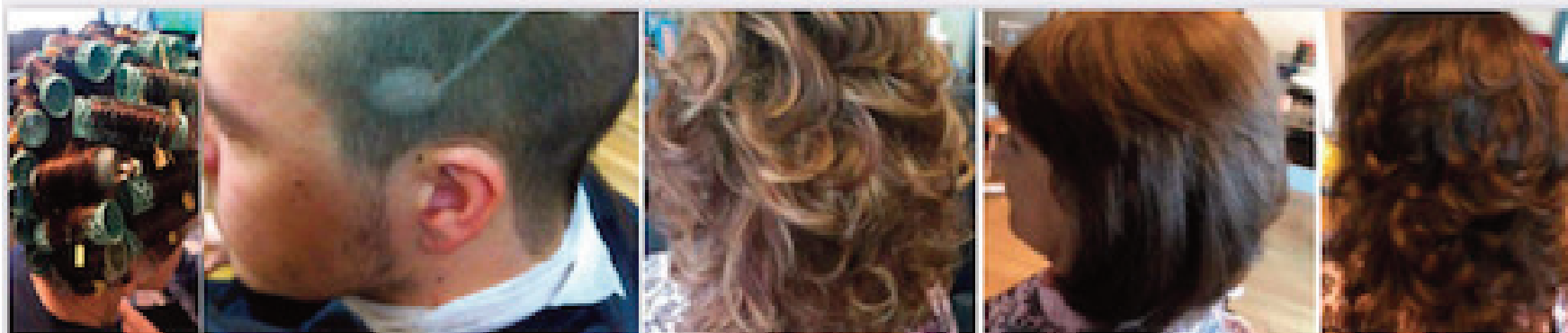
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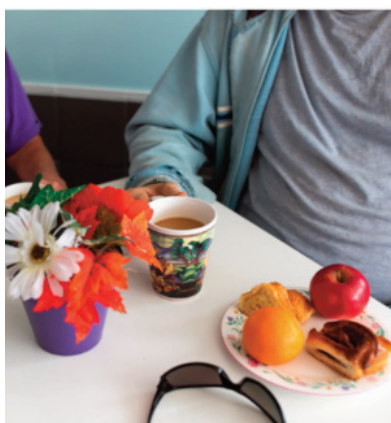
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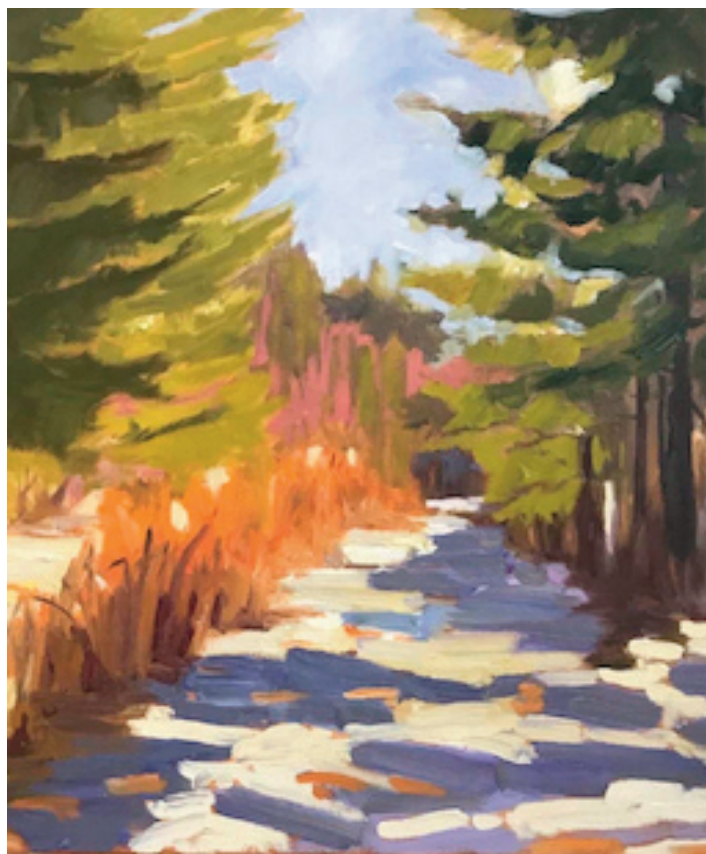
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Feeling stressed or anxious about COVID-19?

by Surjit Singh Flora

The new year and continued lockdowns throughout the province have led many people to feel stressed or anxious about COVID-19; they ought to know that they are not alone.

The ongoing pandemic has caused a spike in mental health concerns, economic fears and the future of many families. The fear and anxiety about a new disease and what may happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children.

Public health activities such as social distancing can cause feelings of isolation and loneliness and increase stress and anxiety.

A recent matter of concern was the delay in doses of the Pfizer COVID vaccine, putting a planned rollout of vaccinations throughout the province at risk of delay.

First, any vaccine is not a complete cure for any disease, as most diseases remain concerned about how they are born and how they are transmitted. How can the virus be eradicated entirely when there is

no definitive information about it?

The process and effects of immunization against the disease are precisely the same as when a baby is vaccinated immediately after birth to prevent the onset of many diseases throughout life.

The epidemic will be stopped by vaccination, but it would be wrong to say that it will be eradicated, so it is wise to follow the instructions given to avoid it. Vaccination has started all over the world and is now happening in many countries.

For now, only health workers and those providing essential services are getting vaccinated, followed by the elderly. How much time this work will take can only be estimated, but still depending on each province's population, country, and how much vaccine doses regions and countries are getting from the suppliers.

It can be said that this work can take from six months to a year. This period will also determine the average success rate of the vaccine and whether scientists may be able to de-

velop new research that may be more effective.

Scientists have said two things about the effect of this vaccine. The first is that the person will survive with the vaccine, but if they have the virus in their body, they can still infect those they encounter, and the second is that if they are still infected.

The vaccine can then be used as a shield to protect others from the disease. This is also because the virus always seems to be progressing with and without symptoms.

This means that we should not assume that those who have been vaccinated cannot get the virus and that those who encounter them are entirely safe.

Until everyone is vaccinated, it is wise to take precautions against the virus. But this work can take months or even years. So, we must learn to use the available methods to avoid this virus.

The disease has changed our way of life. Some of which can be retained, and some can be abandoned. As far as doing office work from

home is concerned, it can be continued in some areas, but it would be better to start work from the office in most cases.

People who work from home say that it is acceptable for a while, but not forever, because it is better to sit and talk face to face.

One of the reasons why the disease is declining in many countries is that most people have changed their diet and their lifestyle habits significantly during this pandemic.

In some cases, this has led to a rise in unhealthy habits — overeating, feelings of depression caused by isolation and stress. It's still too soon to know the full impact of the pandemic on society's psyche as a whole, but it is up to all of us to continue to look after ourselves and make sure we don't fall into a pit of despair due to the ongoing situation.

Patience, care and exercise should be a part of our lifestyle, and these are the prescriptions that we can adopt in our life to avoid dangerous diseases.

Rizzi tapped as city's new fire chief

Former Vaughan Fire Chief Deryn Rizzi has been tapped to lead Mississauga's fire services, the city announced Tuesday.

Rizzi, who takes over from Tim Beckett, who retired from the role late last year, will begin her role on Feb. 2, taking the reins from interim Chief Nancy MacDonald-Duncan.

"Deryn brings a wide range of experience at the federal, provincial and municipal level in leading day-to-day operations and also in strategic support for all areas of the fire service," said the city's commissioner of community services, Shari Lichtermans. "Beyond her work in fire halls, Chief Rizzi is a trusted, respected and sought-after thought leader, committed to mentoring and educating about proven and emerging best practices on emergency preparedness and response."

Rizzi has 20

years' experience in the fire service, including work for the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre in the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management, where she provided leadership and guidance on operations, education and training related to emergencies.

Rizzi also previously served as the Vice President of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, chaired the Human Relations Committee for the International Association of Fire Chiefs and is a member of the Hospice Vaughan Board of Directors.



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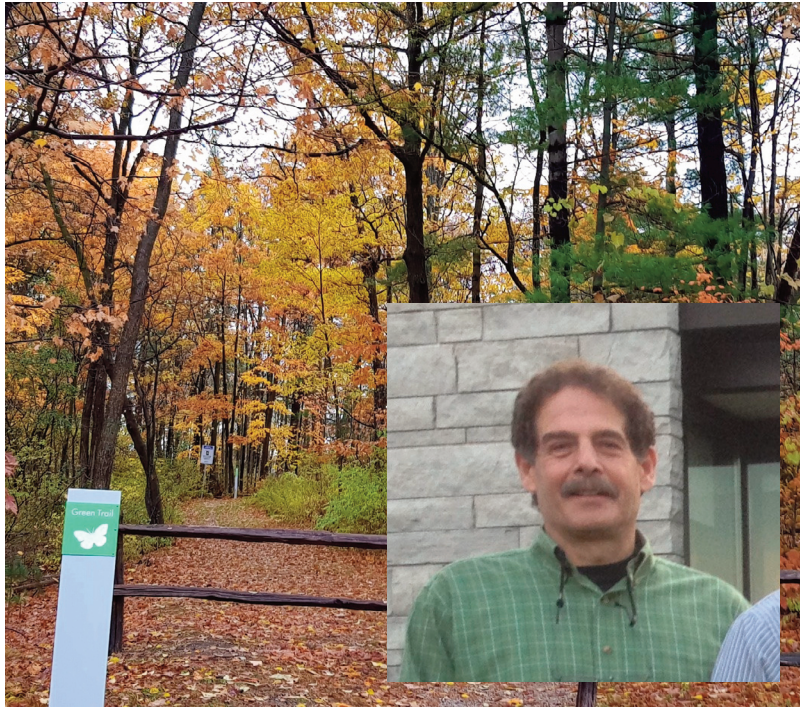
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Executive director of conservancy announces retirement



The executive director of Mississauga's largest nature conservancy has announced his retirement after 17 years at the helm.

Douglass Markoff, who has served as the lead of The Riverwood Conservancy since 2004, announced his intent to retire from the role earlier this week.

"I have had the privilege of being at the helm of this great organization and working alongside remarkable staff, volunteers, directors, and members over the years," said Markoff, who will leave his post in March. "Through the difficulties that have come up, includ-

ing the unprecedented challenges of 2020, I have been consistently inspired by the stories of people who have found meaningful connections to nature at Riverwood. I am confident that TRC will continue to make a tangible difference in improving the lives of both people and wildlife."

Markoff led the organization through periods of major growth, including the expansion of nature-based public programs, fundraising events, and environmental conservation of Riverwood's woodlands, wetlands, and gardens. He also oversaw the establishment

of the Enabling Garden, The Riverwood Conservancy's accessible learning space for individuals with special needs.

"We're grateful to have had someone as dedicated to the environment and the community as Douglas leading our organization," said Riverwood board chair Carolyn Sherk.

"The Riverwood Conservancy is positioned to continue as a leading environmental organization in Mississauga because of Douglas' endeavours."

The board said Monday that a search for a new executive director is in progress.



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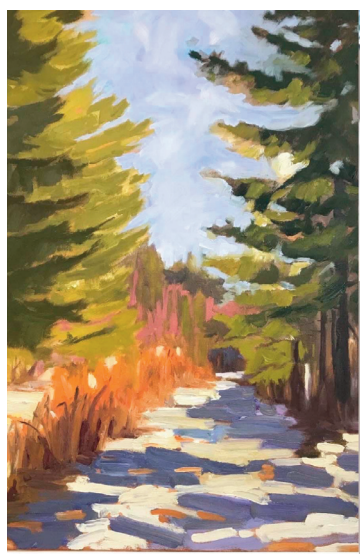
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BUSINESS

Chamber of commerce announces new board, direction

A new decade - and a new direction - are planned as Caledon's Chamber of Commerce ushered in a new era last week.

The Chamber of Commerce said Monday that it had ratified the appointment of a new board of directors, which were sworn in during a virtual ceremony on Jan. 11.

The new board will chart a new direction for Caledon's business community at the onset of a new decade, and seek to give local businesses a voice dur-

ing the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

"Now, more than ever, our business community needs a strong, collective voice," said newly-minted board chair Anthony Caputo. "With the pandemic, we obviously have some huge challenges in front of us, but the Town is an important partner for us and we look forward to working collaboratively with Mayor and Council."

Joining Caputo on the board are Sarah Leslie (first Vice President),

Shannon Turnbull (second Vice President), Pam Davis (treasurer), Jessica Laurenza (secretary), and mem-

bers John Ruscetta and Tish Hansen.

"On behalf of the Town, I wish the new Board all success as they start

this new chapter," said Mayor Allan Thompson.

"The Chamber is an important voice for business in

Caledon and we look forward to working with them to support our local business community."



Brampton businessman gets nod for Business Person of The Year

Vito Ciciretto, President & CEO of Dynacare, has been named 2021 Brampton Business Person of the Year by the Brampton Board of Trade, it was announced late last week.

The Business Person of the Year, which will be awarded at a virtual ceremony in May, is given to an individual that has demonstrated business leadership and

excellence in Brampton, contributing to the city in both professional and personal endeavours.

Throughout his career, Ciciretto has served as a compassionate, decisive and inspiring business leader, and throughout the past year each of these qualities has been on full display. Since the advent of the COVID-19 pan-

demic, Ciciretto has stepped up to support not only the Brampton community, but also communities, public health systems and employees all across Canada.

In 2009, Vito joined Dynacare as Vice-President, Laboratory Operations and Customer Service, bringing with him extensive experience in general management, finance and operations. He was later named Vice-President, Operations in 2012 and appointed as CEO in April 2019.

Though former Dynacare CEO Naseem Somani - who passed away in Mar. 2019 - left incredibly big shoes to fill, Ciciretto has simultaneously honoured her lasting legacy while forging his own path forward for the company.

Nowhere has this important balance been more evident than in Ciciretto's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the outset of the pandemic, Ciciretto and his organization have demonstrated incredible drive, compassion and collaboration in providing critical support to public health systems and communities all across Canada.

While Dynacare laboratory teams worked diligently to validate and implement COVID-19 specimen testing at several lab locations - beginning with their main lab in Brampton - Dynacare courier teams transported COVID-19 specimens in communities across Canada as customer care and operations teams in Manitoba reported negative

results on behalf of public health.

In April, Ciciretto also joined a number of other leaders at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce's Annual General Meeting to highlight the important work of these teams and demonstrate how businesses can adapt and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This support also extended to Dynacare employees, as early on Ciciretto and his executive team made a clear commitment to keeping employees informed, healthy, safe and financially whole throughout the pandemic.

Throughout 2020, Dynacare introduced a number of important innovations to enhance the customer experience.

Though the pandemic presented a

number of challenges to the organization's annual #Dynacare4Diabetes wellness initiative in Manitoba, Dynacare continued to invest in the community and deliver this successful campaign for a third consecutive year, resulting in the screening of over 40,000 Manitobans using the A1C (blood sugar) test.

In November, Ciciretto also announced that Dynacare will bring this important initiative to the Brampton community in spring 2021 to support the city.

Ciciretto will be presented with the 2021 Business Person of The Year award at the (virtual) Brampton Board of Trade Business Excellence Awards Gala on May 6, 2021.



Walmart Canada teams with Thrive to boost morale

Mississauga's Walmart Canada announced plans Tuesday to help build resilience in its base of associate workers and customers through a new strategic partnership with a major U.S. tech company.

The retail giant and Thrive Global, the behaviour change technology company founded by Arianna Huffington, will team to help deliver Thrive's behaviour change capabilities, IP and digital products to help achieve greater long-term impact for its workers and customers.

Huffington recently joined Nabeela Ixtabalan, Executive Vice President, People and Corporate Affairs at Walmart Canada, to launch the Thrive Wellbeing Journey experience for the retail king's employees.

The new program

is aimed at equipping corporate leaders and associates across the organization with the tools to lead with emotional intelligence, and leverage the connection between wellbeing and productivity.

"The pandemic has brought a magnifying glass to the mental health crisis. It's real and Walmart is taking it very seriously," Ixtabalan said last week. "Our goal is to evolve the narrative and experience of workplace wellbeing and contribute to a societal movement that changes the expectations and norms for everyone... as we continue along our wellbeing journey, providing our associates with the best resources and engaging platforms is vital. Together, we will make a difference."

"This pandemic represents an unprecedented opportunity to re-

define how we work. At Thrive Global, we've responded by enriching and scaling our behaviour change technology platform – aimed at helping people reduce stress and build mental resilience – to hundreds of thousands of people around the world," said Huffington. "It is im-

perative to prioritize the mental health and wellbeing of their associates, who have been stepping forward and providing a critical lifeline to their communities this year."

Additionally, Thrive will launch the Thrive ZP app to Walmart Canada associates. The app will con-

nect participants to a community where they can share their stories, support each other, and celebrate success.

It also provides incentives to encourage participants as they build long-lasting healthier habits.

The launch marks Thrive ZP's first international expansion, the

company said in a statement Tuesday.

The initiative focuses on small daily challenges, rather than big long-term outcomes, built on the belief that every individual has the power to transform their life through better choices and peer-to-peer inspiration.



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Ras re-upped as CVC chair

Mississauga Councillor Karen Ras was acclaimed as chair of Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) during its first board meeting of the decade, held last Friday.

Ras was first elected Chair in 2019 and has served on the CVC board since 2014.

"I'm honoured to be acclaimed as chair," Ras said Friday. "I take great pride in the work we do to protect, connect and sustain our local environment and I'm eager to help CVC work through the expected challenges of enacting the requirements of the updated Conservation Authorities Act."

CVC's board of directors also acclaimed Town of

Oakville Councillor Tom Adams as Vice Chair. Adams has served on the CVC board since 2011 and has served as Vice Chair in 2013 and currently since 2019.

The CVC board consists of 12 members from watershed municipalities, all of whom were also reappointed to the Credit Valley Source Protection Authority, including Brampton councillors Martin Medeiros and Michael Palleschi, and Mississauga councillors Ron Starr, Stephen Dasko and Matt Mahoney, among others.

The board approves and guides CVC policies, programs, services and sets its annual budget.

Brampton Animal Services first in country to offer home-to-home service

Brampton Animal Services announced Tuesday that it will be the first pet services group in the country offer Home To Home, an interactive service to help pet owners who can no longer keep their pets find new, loving homes without having to surrender them to the shelter.

The company said this week that the new program can track pets as they go from their current home into their new one.

Current pet owners and new pet owners can communicate directly within the platform to receive firsthand information about the animals and arrange to transfer their pets.

The re-homing website will help Brampton pet

owners who need to find a new home for their pets, including dogs, cats and other animals.

The current pet owner simply fills out a brief online form and uploads a picture to submit a pet for re-homing.

There is no charge to re-home a pet for either party. Owners are asked to notify Brampton Animal Services when their pet is safely in its new home.

While re-homing pets through the service will alleviate the need for some pets to be surrendered to the shelter, it may not be suitable for all re-homing needs. Animals can still be surrendered directly to the shelter on a case-by-case basis.

"We hope to see

less surrenders to our shelter and more pets finding homes quickly and smoothly in Brampton," said Wards 9 & 10 councillor Harkirat Singh, who

chairs the city's Corporate Services board.

For more information on the program, visit brampton.ca/animal-services.



Hospital opens up wait time viewing for emergency patients

Local residents can now check Emergency Departments' wait times online and at Brampton hospitals, William Osler Health System announced earlier this week.

The wait times for both Brampton Civic Hospital and Etobicoke General Hospital Emergency Departments (ED) are now available on Osler's website and in the hospitals' emergency department waiting rooms, providing patients and those seeking care with information that lets

them know what to expect so they can plan ahead when possible, and make informed decisions about their care.

Individual wait time is determined by the seriousness of a patient's illness/condition and the number of patients who are awaiting care, meaning the sickest patients will be seen most quickly.

Regardless of the wait time displayed on the 'ED Wait Clocks', anyone who is in need of emergency care

should immediately come to the Emergency Department or call 911.

"We're pleased to be able to provide this resource to our patients and community, and provide anyone coming into our Emergency Departments with useful information at their fingertips to help make their experience less stressful, chief operating officer at Osler. "Sharing timely information about the expected wait will have a significant positive im-

pact in improving the patient experience by helping to keep patients and families informed."

The current estimated wait time includes the time it takes a patient to be triaged, registered, and seen by a physician or nurse practitioner.

Refreshed every 30 minutes, Osler's ED Wait Clocks also provide information on how many patients are being treated, how many patients are waiting to be treated, as well

as predicted wait times over a 24-hour period. Wait times reflect the 90th percentile – meaning nine out of 10 patients are likely seen within this time.

"One of the most frequent questions patients in our Emergency Departments ask is 'How much longer will it take for me to see a doctor?' and the ED Wait Clocks are another way to help keep people informed during what can be a very stressful time," said Dr. Andrew

Healey, the health system's chief of emergency medicine. "It's important to stress that patients should not make decisions about their care solely based on the wait time, and should use the seriousness of their symptoms to guide their decision to come to the Emergency Department."

The ED Wait Clocks can be found on the homepage of Osler's website (williamoslerhs.ca).



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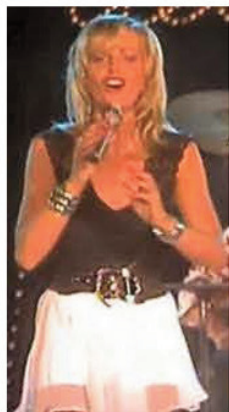
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LIFESTYLE / AROUND TOWN

Pandemic program aims to reduce isolation among elderly

A Mississauga arts organization is working to reduce isolation among the elderly during the pandemic by introducing a new series of virtual workshops to bring entertainment to vulnerable residents.

The #MonsterArts for Seniors program, which launches this month, will provide the elderly with stimulating,

professionally-led arts workshops in English, Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Tamil and more to reduce feelings of isolation.

Seniors can enjoy South Asian culture through free online workshops in Bollywood dance, Hindi and Tamil music, poetry, painting, and more.

The Sheridan Centre for Elder Research says that

over one-third of South Asian seniors in Peel feel isolated and are at risk for depression, and there's a lack of ethnic-specific programs for them to create meaningful connections.

Such programs are especially relevant now that seniors have been physically isolated for an extended period due to COVID-19, organ-

izers said.

#MonsterArts for Seniors, offered by MonstrARTity, a not-for-profit organization in Mississauga, fills gaps in cultural and language-specific services for seniors in the community.

The program has been received exceptionally well, and participants from various community organizations like Shubh Helping Hands, Vaishno Devi Temple Seniors Group and many others across

the province have expressed their appreciation for the program that helps reduce their feelings of isolation.

"Not being able to see our children and grandchildren and of course, our friends and family could have been extremely [bad]. Thanks to you all,

I, for one, have so much to look forward to every week," said one participant, while another said, "Thank you so much to the whole team for arranging these wonderful workshops for us during these tough and lonely times of pandemic. You all bring so much cheer in our lives."

The organization said Tuesday that 47 per cent of South Asian seniors it surveyed stated that they only talk to people face-to-face every week or less.

Through this program, seniors reconnect with their peers through interactive virtual workshops led by experienced artists. "It keeps me occupied, and my brain remains active, which helps

to be away from depression," expressed one participant, and said another, "It was great that we are involved virtually and doing some activity at home rather than going outside in these weird times."

Those interested in helping their parents/granparents access the courses can visit monsterarts.ca/seniors for more information and a registration page.

MonstrARTity will also provide special art kits and technical requirements to seniors within the Peel Region on a first-come, first-serve basis, and support needed to ensure the program is accessible at no cost to seniors and seniors' groups who request it.



Good Morning, Sir - Can I Offer You A Sandwich?

by William Graham. Special

I asked a gentleman wearing a large backpack who approached one of the free food tables we run in Mississauga this question recently.

"Oh yes," he said with no hesitation as he took a sandwich and juice pack. He was the first person this Sunday morning at 5:50 a.m.

It was two degrees, low wind, no snow and not a bad morning. I was fortunate that I had lots to offer him. Seems, if you are willing to help, He always provides.

I asked the man

where he was coming from, and he said he was sleeping until about 4:30 and was up and walking since that time, and he was hungry.

People on the street claim that from 4 a.m. until daylight, it is the longest and most lonely time of the night.

Often, the Tims would let them in to sit in the corner out of the way, and often give them a coffee and food, but now, very few will take the chance letting them in. The homeless have been forgotten during

this pandemic, regardless of what the "powers that be" say.

The next two weeks are really bad because everyone who got their cheque early in December is broke now or before now. The food that people leave on the table, the sandwiches that other groups and individuals make do help.

It doesn't solve the problem, but it does help. Everything helps to some extent and we are so fortunate we are able to help.

Before COVID started, (my wife)

Shirley and I spent Tuesdays at a Church where they made a supper for about 40 - 60 people, many of whom were on the street. Shirley helped in the kitchen with two cooks. Every part of the meal was perfectly prepared, and as one of

the cooks said: "We have to prepare this as if we were cooking for the Lord, and who knows, maybe he is there."

Think about that. I spent the day mainly talking to the ones that came.

Many interesting people with great backgrounds. They

should not have been on the street, but most didn't even have a social worker.

While this pandemic is a bad thing, it is an opportunity to serve in ways that we would not otherwise have.



Health and Wellness - Making The Most of Today

by Elizabeth Banfalvi

What do I need to know today? What do I need to embrace today? What do I need to do today?

Today, it is the time we can change things. Yesterday, as much as we might regret what we did or failed to do, it is over.

Tomorrow, it isn't here yet but we can plan on doing something or accomplishing something – it is waiting.

Our world is full of all three and there to do the changes and accomplish something that will change your life sometimes small and sometimes in a great way.

So, who can help you do this – YOU can! We can expect someone to help but their help might not fall in line with what you need. One thing we can't do is blame them if something

goes wrong.

Blaming puts other people in charge of your happiness. Accepting responsibility empowers you to create your own. – Source Unknown

Be the person in control of what you want. Others might help or give you advice or do it for you but that is never a guarantee it will be right for you.

Let your children know they can do it for themselves and you are there to help. Watch them grow knowing this.

"You owe yourself everything you expect from others. – Nicky Verd

Be responsible for your own wishes, dreams and hopes. As much as someone else might seem the same, they aren't.

So, go for it and if you make a mistake or trip yourself up,

then realize you have to try again and maybe readjust what you did but don't give up.

A dream is a wish your heart makes. – Disney

Accept responsibility for your actions. Be accountable for your results. Take ownership of your mistakes. – Source Unknown

I taught my grandson to always make a wish upon a star. Whenever we went out in the night, he did. He always looked up and saw the stars not just what was happening to him.

I never knew what he wished for, but he was happy. Find the happiness you deserve. It is always there so why not be happy.

When you wish upon a star makes no difference who you are, anything

your heart desires will come to you. – Pinocchio, Disney

You are responsible for your own happiness. – Source Unknown

Every thing that happens to you is an opportunity to learn. Learn what wins and what fails and why.

Were you expecting a different result and it didn't happen? Did you try hard enough? What attitude did you go into what you wanted?

If all you thought of was failure, then that is exactly what you will get. If you believe in success, then you will see the success no matter how small of what you do. Your choice!

Sometimes you win, and sometimes you learn. – Pretty Nurse Shan

Today, is where you can change

everything but you have to open your mind to success, imagine that anything is possible, and then act on it.

Be the best you can be, and tomorrow will come with all new possibilities. There will always be possibilities if you are willing to open to them.

I had a workshop and told a story about an old man who sat halfway between two cities. An angry man came along and asked the old man what would the next city be like.

The old man asked the angry man what the last city was like. The angry man said it was terrible and you couldn't trust anyone. The old man said the next city is the same. Off the angry man stomped.

Another man came along and he was happy. He

asked the old man the same question about the next city. The old man asked him what the last city was like?

The happy man said it was wonderful and so many wonderful people whom he trusted. The old man said that it would be the same in the next city.

Off the happy man went. It is what you expect and you will get it.

You only have control of three things in your life: the thoughts you think, the images you visualize, and the actions you take. – Jack Canfield

Decide what you want and then put it into action. Be happy and the world will be happy. What could be better and you deserve it?

BBBS and Merrell partner on youth program partnership

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) and Merrell will join forces in a multi-year partnership that will harness the power of being outside and make it more accessible to more youth.

Merrell, known for its outdoor and lifestyle footwear and apparel, will be a premier outdoor industry partner of BBBS, which operates its head offices in Mississauga, and will work with the national one-to-one mentoring organizations to create life-changing connections for young people in the United States and Canada.

The BBBS mentoring program pairs young people with caring adult mentors.

The goal of the partnership with Merrell is to break down the barriers to the outdoors that youth face while providing outside activities for Bigs and Littles to enjoy together, organizers said this week.

With heightened time spent indoors and behind screens due to societal changes and the COVID-19 pandemic, Merrell and BBBS are encouraging and providing youth access to the outdoors in order for

them to reap the imperative mental and physical health benefits time outside provides.

In addition to a financial contribution to BBBS and outdoor gear to youth in the mentoring programs, the partnership will bring more awareness and increase equity for all youth, who may not have adequate access to nature, natural parks, or public trails.

The need for connecting is even stronger now, with young people facing social isolation due to the pandemic.

"We've seen research that shows

early exposure to nature and green spaces can support mental and physical health," said Matthew Chater, National President and CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada. "And when you consider that many of the youth we serve are already facing adverse childhood experiences—trauma, abuse or neglect—having this type of outlet for their well-being can make a long-lasting, positive impact on their lives."

"Our purpose at Merrell is to share the simple power of being outside with

everyone. We believe the earlier you get outside the better – hopefully to reap a lifetime of the physical and emotional benefits of the outdoors," said Chris Hufnagel, Global Brand President of Merrell. "Our partnership with BBBS will bring together our joint missions of getting more youth the access they otherwise would not have in order to foster a lifelong connection to our outside spaces, whether it's a local park or your front yard."

The partnership will develop guides, resources, and acti-

vations to give Bigs and Littles opportunities to get outside, with elevated campaigns during times such as Great Outdoors Month in June, as well as Merrell's 40th birthday celebration happening throughout the year.

During Big Brothers Big Sisters Month in September, Bigs and Littles will have the opportunity to participate in the Step Further Challenge, an interactive activity to track outdoor activities and compete with others.

Thumbnail Sketches - Wellspring of a Creative Spirit

by E.C. Munson

Ila, a wood-fired kiln built by local potter Ann Randeraad, was torn down and completely rebuilt last year, which was followed by a successful firing.

I had followed with much interest the 2020 Facebook postings Ann Randeraad made about this delicate process, the other sister potters who helped with this engineering feat, and their elation afterwards.



But then I had to know, whence came this name for Ann's formidable wood-fired kiln?

"Ila is my grandmother's name, Scottish, Irish, and English, too. She was creative, gutsy, and wrote a newspaper column under a gender-neutral name. She paid cash for a new fur coat and then restyled it. She was hard working with so much perseverance."

Ann's own creative journey bears the hallmark of this heritage. She and her husband Dirk live with their children and grandchildren on their farm as a multi-family household. Ann grew up next door to this same farm property and remembers playing in the attic with the granddaughter of the former owners.

Today she has her ceramics business on site, a studio and shop, plus the storage for the wood needed to fire Ila.

While Dirk is a tree surgeon and Ann holds credentials as a landscape technician and ice technician, their exotic menagerie and forays into various niche market farming endeavours over the decades are an integral part of her questing, creative spirit.

Then there is no way around it. I have to ask her about those rumours of their llamas escaping and visiting the local public school.

Laughing, she says, "We started with a Jersey cow, and yes, we had an Exotic Animal Farm for a couple of decades."

Apparently while the llamas did find the grass greener on the other side of their fence on more than one occasion, at the height of their farm they had emus, ostriches, a wild boar, yaks, lemurs, and two varieties of peacocks.

Today they still have Kevin and Priscilla, beautiful peacocks, who wander freely about even in the winter, with the two white



peacocks being housed in a poultry shed as they are such easy prey due to their colouring.

Well-grounded in her community and arts practice, Ann looked at the need for food security in their area. She, along with other potters and key community groups, did the start-up for the Empty Bowls food drive.

She makes and donates hundreds of bowls every year for this volunteer driven effort, which to date has raised over \$100,000 for local food banks in 11 years.

Busy also with her booth at the Orangeville Farmers' Market on Saturdays, she holds a membership with the Headwaters Arts collective as well. You can be sure to see her work in many of their exhibits and shows at the Headwaters Arts Gallery at the Alton Mill Arts Centre.



Continued on Next Page

Continued from Previous Page

Clearly, Ann is happily in the throes of creative productivity. This past fall, she was awarded Orangeville's 2020 Arts & Culture Established Artist of the Year. Such a well-earned honour and recognition, and built on that same spirit of perseverance as her grandmother, Ila.

Feeding Ila the kiln for firing her pottery though, requires a lot of wood, which again bears the unique stamp of Ann's ingenuity. She sources it from skid wood and a flooring company's cut-offs, which yields both hard and soft woods.



Tending a firing of Ila is a culmination of a labour of love with much hard and dirty work leading up to it. From point of contact with a lump of clay on her potter's wheel or workbench if hand-building, steps along the way include throwing or building an object to its partial drying then trimming, which precedes the bisque firing followed by the glaze mixing and application. Only then is the object ready for the final firing, which could be one either electric or wood-fired.



Ila is designed for fast and efficient firings, which can be from 15 – 30 hours of careful tending and feeding. The shifts of potters watch the cone packs, temperature indicators, as Ila is brought up to a minimum of 2300 F, then the kiln's fireboxes are closed up and the pressure is dissipated through the chimney.

The beauty of the unknown alchemy, which occurs with wood-firings as the ash deposits interact with the various glazes, is also affected by how loosely or tightly they packed the kiln's interior.

It takes three days to cool Ila off to 70 F before opening, and at last, unpacking the pieces.

Her transition to wood firing from the electric kilns was 15 years ago, almost half of her three decades of doing pottery.

She explained that there are more layers to the process and the intricacy of the results are some of the biggest differences. "It's not light a match nor push a button like with gas-fired or electric kilns. It's a community firing."

Ann can trace her fascination with clay back to her child's play with mud patties carefully formed and laid out to dry in the sun and her contacts with family friend, well-known artist, Joseph Panacci. She went to him for advice on developing her portfolio when applying to Sheridan for their Illustration program.

He was taking a ceramics course at OCAD, later becoming a full time potter, and had advised her against going into such a physically demanding field. However, seeing him throw pots and work with the clay was captivating. "I knew then I wanted to do something with clay!"

But first Ann did go to Sheridan and studied Illustration, living for six months in Brampton. And that was all she needed to know that city life was not for her, so she returned happily to her rural roots. After finishing her courses in Illustration, she studied for and obtained her Landscape Technician's credentials.

Looking back on the trajectory of her artistic development, I am struck by how the different themes or motifs are picked up again at different stages and reincorporated. Nothing has been left behind.

Ann has recently illustrated a child's book and is now gathering material for a second book on farm life, her sketch book at the ready. With maturity, she muses, comes that desire to say more and produce thought provoking work with a message. For her growth as a ceramicist, this involves sculptures and continued professional development within her global network.

Wood-firing kilns are less than 10 per cent of the ceramics done in North America with a rich sharing of skills and resources in this niche profession. Conferences with world renowned artisans from Japan, Australia, and North Carolina bring knowledge from centuries of tradition. Some techniques have evolved and are handed-down through generations of potters in a family.

Ann's studio and showroom are housed on the farm located in Amaranth, at 284337 County Road 10, northwest of Orangeville, where empty bowls and more await visitors in a shop of glorious ceramic pieces.

Be prepared for sightings of Kevin and Priscilla and note that any conversation punctuated by laughter could be joined in on with excited sounds from the several lemurs who reside in a private, two-storied corner area of the studio. You can even consider taking home some free-range eggs from their chicken flock.

Call before visiting at (519) 938-2092 or email her at annranderad@yahoo.com.

Visit Ann's website and follow her on social media at www.annranderadpottery.com, and @annranderadpottery. You can look for her on Facebook at Ann Randerad for updates on Ila's firings and current work.

Local writer, photographer, and artist E.C. Munson covers the arts and cultural scene as experienced through the eyes of other creatives and makers.

Contact her at ellie73m@gmail.com.



A Very Different (and Virtual) Valentine's Day

by **Surjit Singh Flora**

After festivals such as Christmas and new year were celebrated in isolation, many residents and families examined their views of love and connection in the current "pandemic world."

Valentine's Day is normally a festival full of beautiful feelings for love and romance, but in the age of COVID, spending time together with loved ones will be very hard.

We celebrated our Christmas and New Year's Day virtually, but Valentine's Day is a different matter.

How do lovers touch and feel each other across a computer screen?

Do they express their emotions? Many of those couples that already live together may be stressed, worried and scared of getting COVID, while others are breaking all the social distancing rules in pursuit of romance, complete with the romantic candle-light dinner.

Valentine's Day can be something entirely different from what it traditionally is, which normally included

candle-lit dinner dates and a bouquet of flowers.

Valentine's day was made for Love, but nowadays, it has a different meaning for lovers, and that is "lust."

Valentine's Day sparks romantic, loving feelings within those in committed relationships, as well as single individuals.

Expressing love and care towards anybody is not only considerate but also necessary.

Yet, Valentine's Day seems to be the only day when showing love to a

loved one determines the status and outcome of a romantic relationship.

Valentine's Day is the day to remember to value love and extend that love to others, not just your spouse, partner, or loved ones.

COVID-19 brought us much closer to each other, while love is such a part of life in demand by every creature on this earth who survives in society, whether it is from mammals, reptiles, animals or any other.

Affection is such a thing that bring us closer together, and is a much more straightforward gesture.

The place and position of that person in life is admirable and undoubtedly of utmost importance as being the important person in someone else's life.

Many such Valentine's gift ideas are considered appreciable when gifted on this celebratory day.

Giving gifts and fancy dinners is al-

ways great fun, but it seems that such rituals are expected among couples. It is natural to enjoy being showered with love and affection — both emotionally and materialistically.

However, Valentine's Day, in particular, is a condition for a relationship.

It amazes me honestly that receiving diamonds, chocolate and flowers can make or break a relationship in just one day.

Flowers that die, chocolate that causes cavities, and jewelry that may dull or lose their lustre should never make any relationship happy.

While some may look at Valentine's as an opportunity to... "live freely" with multiple partners, they'll most likely end up on the couch at their own homes this year, sulking in defeat.

Young people are also passionate about celebrating this holiday, so it is a profitable business to exchange gifts, greetings and

cards, chocolates and flowers between loving couples. As a result, the market is full of greeting cards, rose sticks, bouquets and various gifts.

Because of COVID-19, companies, and huge discounts for online shopping are gaining traction to attract couples. Such offers are flooding the internet.

According to various surveys, Valentine's Day has become the second-largest greeting card exchange festival in sales of greeting cards.

Although Valentine's Day is not considered a national holiday -- the few government offices, shops, schools, and other organizations that can still stay open as usual will do so -- it is officially recognized as a romantic holiday to express gratitude to our loved ones.

One thing's for sure — this will be a very different Valentine's Day.



Paramount Fine Foods to open new location in partnership with Rabba

Mississauga-based Paramount Fine Foods will team with a major grocer to open a new location in Toronto later this year, as part of a new shop-in-shop pilot concept.

Rabba Fine Foods said late last month that it will open a new local market in Regent Park in early 2021, in part-

nership with Paramount, featuring a new pilot concept that will introduce a shop-in-shop take-out counter with freshly-made meal options with a Middle Eastern-inspired menu.

"We've been great fans of Paramount Fine Foods over the years," says Jack Rabba, founder

of Rabba and a long time supporter of initiatives and events in Peel Region.

"This collaboration is a result of many months of planning... the final product passes with flying colours, and a very satisfied appetite."

Reflecting the mutual respect shared be-

tween the two homegrown and entrepreneurial food-service brands, the concept will be piloted and, in time, is expected to be rolled out across multiple locations in the Rabba network.

"The region of the Middle East has long been revered for its flavours, spices and

wholesome meals," says Mohamad Fakhri, founder and president of Paramount Fine Foods. "Together with Jack Rabba and his team, we'll be able to honour our common roots while sharing our love of food with even more people than we could achieve on our own. In these

times of pandemic, it's more important than ever for all of us to celebrate life's greatest, often small and humble, pleasures."

The location is currently under construction. More details on the menu options to come in the following months.

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Navigating the Artful Corridors of Commerce

by E.C. Munson

From artists braving the elements to do plein air painting, to the discipline of the 30-day and sometimes 100 day practices they take on, there is much going on with these creative makers in their studios. Likewise, arts organizations are very busy with calls for submissions to new shows and promoting current virtual tours and exhibitions.

And amidst all this, there is a plethora of classes, workshops, and one session events the general public is taking from them. Organizations spotlight on their current members.

Laura Beaton's body of work and her career as an established artist is recognized by Mississauga Arts Council. An active member of a number of arts groups, such as Arts On The Credit in Mississauga and Headwaters Arts in Alton (Caledon), Laura's Wearable Art may be seen at www.laurabeatonart.com.

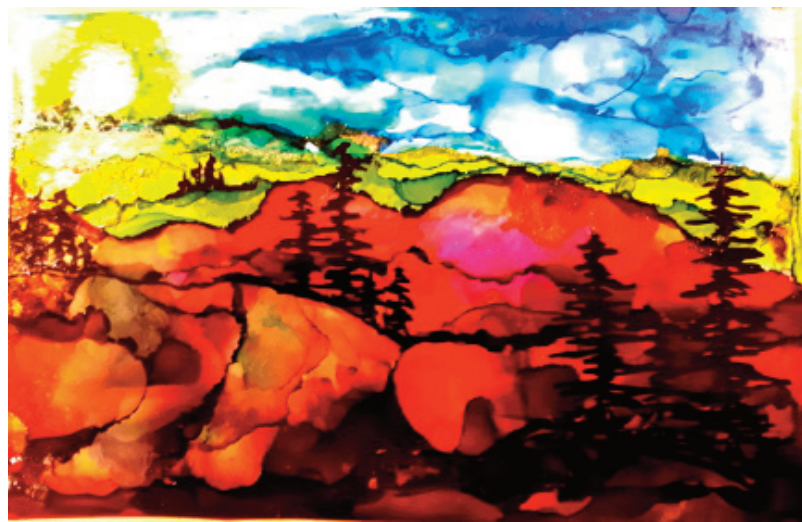
Credit Valley Artisans in Georgetown is celebrating a new member, Milly Tseng (www.creditvalleyartisans.ca/MillyTseng.html). Enjoy her video which shows her range of work from a recent solo exhibition she hung at Steve Wilson's Niagara Falls, ON, gallery. Visit her website at www.millytseng.com.

Elizabeth Bryan – has a short video clip on Dufferin Spotlight's Facebook page.

(www.facebook.com/326399281290533/videos/176750634200370). A weaver and resident of Orangeville, she is a member of three arts organizations that span the entire Artful Corridors of Commerce: Headwaters Arts in Alton (Caledon), Arts On The Credit, Mississauga, and the Weavers Guild at the Art Gallery of Burlington. Her studio, Weaverbee Wearable Textiles, is in Orangeville.

And now for more spotlights on Artful Renewal and Well-Being going out to ...

Stella Capogna, a member of Headwaters Arts who hails from the Orangeville area, is an inspired artist/sculptor retired from the education field. She is offering virtual Friday evening Paint Nights with a focus on building community and keeping emotional resiliency strong for people constricted by the pandemic's lockdown and who have an interest in art. Friday, Jan. 22 is a continuation of alcohol inks, controlling the flow and landscape exploration. Contact her at stella.capogna@gmail.com for the Zoom link, supplies list, and any questions - by donation.



Thaniath Siddiqui, member of ArtTrendZ, also has contributed to the greater good by offering drop by virtual art making demos with Facebook Events. Being absorbed in the process of creating something and invited into a community of like-minded people are some of the healthiest choices people can make for themselves. ArtTrendZ has a tradition of reaching out to engage with others and expose the larger community to the joys of absorption in artful expression. Follow Thaniath on Instagram @thaniath and ask about her online classes and art journaling.

The development of new techniques, honing of current skills, discovery of different materials, and search for inspiration for artists is ongoing. Musicians practice scales, dancers exercise, and artists engage in challenges.

Sherry Park is doing the 2021 Strada Easel daily global challenge.

For all of January, she is painting, drawing, sketching something from real life. Follow her @sherrypark on Instagram or Facebook to see her plein air and still life pieces from this challenge. A member of Headwaters Arts and Visual Arts Brampton, she maintains a full schedule showing work in many venues. Her solo show, Cape Breton Highlands, moved upstairs from the Headwaters Arts Gallery to hang in the Pond Gallery in the Alton Mill Arts Centre. You may both view this show and purchase virtually from it at www.headwatersarts.com/sherry-park-cape-breton-highlands.



The VAM43 showcase was launched with a Facebook Live Event on Jan. 14 which may be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFSbuk6tES4. Award winners may be viewed at www.vamjuriedshow.com/vam43-award-winners. This exciting and eclectic mix of traditional and contemporary visual art works from 43 artists was curated with submissions from over 150 artists across the province. This virtual exhibition is on through Dec. 31, 2021 and may be viewed at www.vamjuriedshow.com/exhibitions.

You can continue to enjoy artist S'jon de Groot's virtual solo show with Arts On The Credit at www.artsonthecredit.ca/gallerythrough the end of January. His is a rich tapestry of cultural influences with his Dutch ancestry, having immigrated from South Africa to Canada, and a practitioner of more traditional European techniques with oils. As an established artist, de Groot continues to explore with different media, as can be seen in this energizing show with his strong colours and decisive brush work.

Showing through to Feb. 28 is A NEW MOOD, a virtual show from seven artist members of Headwaters Arts. Join their decisive and energetic launch into our new decade with an eclectic collection of landscapes, florals, still life, and abstract pieces. Be excited about these artists' moods as we move into our brave, new decade brave. You may view and purchase from this exhibition on the website at www.headwatersarts.com/our-current-show/.



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There is still time to catch the inspirational virtual Winter Art Show at Brampton's gem, Beaux Arts Gallery.

(www.beauxartsbrampton.org/copy-of-exhibitions-1) The exhibit is on through Jan. 31, with several emerging, mid-career, and established artists exciting work. Arrangements to purchase and pickup work is online following all current public health guidelines.

WORKSHOPS, CLASSES, and more activities! These organizations or artists have options galore for children, tweens, adolescents, and adults. Peruse those offerings and find purpose for each and every one in your household.

Visual Arts Brampton's newsletter has the full story on classes for all ages and stages! From Winter Art Classes for Kids & Teens to Paint Nights for two people in a household at \$20, there is a tremendous range of courses offered. Contact them by phone at (905) 453-9142 or by email (info@visualartsbrampton.com). Or, if you would like to continue learning on your own, you can go to their YouTube channel for several courses. Visit www.youtube.com/user/vablearn. With an impressive 4.95 K subscribers, you can watch Art Exploration, Art Fundamentals, Cartooning & Animation, Creative Crafts, Print Making and more.

While crazes can hit at all ages [remember pet rocks?], Cathy Disbrow, of Woolly Doodles and textile artist and felter, says that adolescents have a real thing for her quirky and soft critters. She has a Snowy Owl workshop on Saturday, Jan. 23; register by Friday. You can buy DIY kits that are perfect for those who like making things on their own. Later this year Snowy Owl will be available as a kit. See her kits at www.woollydoodles.com/needle-felting-kits.



Engage with online courses from the Art Gallery of Burlington and discover your creative-expressive side. These long winter evenings or quiet afternoons at home can come alive with virtual workshops.

Visual Arts Mississauga also has three classes for emerging, mid-career, or established artists. The planning behind a piece of art is integral to its execution, there is Zan Barrage's Before the Brush and two courses offered by Fausta Facciponte, Professional Development for Artists and Anatomy of an Exhibition.

SUBMISSION CALLS mean opportunities for artists, photographers, and sculptors to apply for exhibitions or shows. These are important ways for makers to get their work out in front of people. Calls to Submit still open include the following with deadlines fast approaching.

Deadline is Feb. 1 to submit to the Museum of Dufferin special call open to residents of Canada, with no fees to enter, and for both professional and amateur creatives. Juried photography and art show has monetary prizes and is in partnership with the Dufferin County Canadian Black Association. This will be a Black History Month Digital Exhibition with the theme of "Solidarity in my Community." The application form and submission guidelines are at www.dufferinmuseum.com/bhm.

Deadline is Jan. 23 to submit to Beaux Arts Gallery of Brampton's special exhibition for Black History Month. For more information on this Call-for-Entry, please go to I Know Why at ... www.beauxartsbrampton.org/callforsubmissions. Beaux Arts "seeks artworks from Black artists for an exhibition that not only demonstrates (their) committed effort to supporting Black culture and its many contributions to the arts, (but) also serve as a platform meant for the celebration of Black Artists, who undoubtedly deserve a place to be seen, heard, and above all, valued."

McMichael Art Gallery is sponsoring an Makers Market Online Auction. Canadian artisans, designers, and makers will receive

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50 per cent of the proceeds with the remainder going to support the renown institution's core mission for educational outreach, exhibitions, and public programming.

Deadline to apply is Feb. 1, 2021. For more information about this opportunity, please go to www.mcmichael.com/event/call-for-artisans-designers/.



**McMichael
Makers'
Market
Online Auction**

Mississauga Arts Council's MACTivities Newsletter has a listing of several Calls to Submit, two from Visual Arts Mississauga. See those opportunities for young people with a Jan. 31 deadline for VAM's Now Streaming exhibit, for youths 18 – 29 years of age; details at www.visualartsmississauga.com.

Another short lead time for student photography submissions with Gallery 44, Camera Links. It is open to elementary and secondary students and has a Feb. 1 deadline; details at www.gallery44.org/youth-programs.

And then for people at the other end of the age spectrum, there is Visual Arts Mississauga Third Chapter: Celebrating Lifelong Learning Feb. 15 deadline. The bigger picture can include exhibits out of the area and informative musing about

the role that art plays in our society. For a bit of both of these keep reading.

Further afield on the west coast is SSNAP, the Salt Spring National Art Prize, a biennial event open to Canadian citizens or permanent residents. The deadline is May 31 at midnight, PST. Details on this prestigious exhibition are at

www.saltspringartprize.ca/submit/.

CBC has a link well worth checking out about how art can affect children during this pandemic. Visit www.cbc.ca/news/health/art-children-covid-19-1.5875082.

Finally, a grade nine student shows us how she is impacted by the virtual realities that have become her life. See her story at www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSkbd6hRkXo. And yes, it's gone viral!

Local writer, photographer, and artist E.C. Munson covers the arts and cultural scene as experienced through the eyes of other creatives and makers. Contact her at ellie73m@gmail.com.

Are smartphones negatively impacting children?

by Surjit Singh Flora

Have we been going about smartphones the wrong way, when it comes to our children?

Sometimes, parents give young children mobile phones to please them, and sometimes to satisfy their stubbornness. They consider smartphones to be the most useful toy, which is weakening their brain.

Its constant use is straining the muscles of their hands. Even children are moving away from their real games and physical activities, which kept them physically fit.

They spend all their time on their phones and hardly ever meet face to face anymore. It's not healthy.

This is not only about their social life, but also about what they do on their mobile phones. Children don't know the dangers of the Internet.

Therefore, when they talk to strangers, they think they can be trusted and reveal information that they might harm them.

They very well could be talking to a stalker, killer or drug addict, and are giving information away, totally unaware of the danger. Kids take terrible risks and don't think of the consequences.

Technology all together is ruining kids. Yeah, there are positive things, like communication, learning, all that good stuff, but what about all the bad stuff?

What happens when your child gets in contact with a total stranger, who very well could be a predator? You could not only get hurt, but your child would as well.

As a result, children are gradually

moving away from the outside world and prefer to be alone.

The easy way to find online content has also changed the way they read.

Now they don't want to work hard and don't remember. They are forgetting to study hard and getting away from real knowledge. The brain keeps moving due to getting new information, and the focus is getting distracted from actual studies and sports.

Thus, parents and teachers are often reprimanded; they like to distance themselves from them and often fall prey to bad company.

Having a mobile phone in the hands of children certainly keeps them focused. Sometimes watching games and sometimes social sites does not give them comfort and

affects their eyes a lot, due to which they may have to wear glasses in their childhood.

Research suggests that mobile phones should only be provided to children over 16 years of age, due to potential unintended effects of mobile phone radiation.

Watching mobile video late at night may also deprive them of sleep and fatigue throughout the day, which is the biggest obstacle in their physical development.

Children suffer from many diseases, and their sleep is also affected. Not getting enough sleep can make them irritable and sometimes even lead to depression.

Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, many children are already depressed and not attending schools, their mental stress

is increasing, and when sitting on a smartphone, it is more harmful.

Excessive use of mobile phones has also taken children away from relationships. They prefer to stick to their cell phone rather than listen to anyone.

This is also the reason why children are moving away from rituals and morals, which is weakening the social structure.

Their social development is being hampered. Even in bed, the mobile is not leaving. Sometimes children watch such games alone and try to act like their heroes. Sometimes they get into accidents.

Parents themselves should use mobile devices when needed and try to keep their children away as much as possible by informing them about the dangers of

mobiles so that childhood can be maintained in children.

Taking care of childhood is a moral responsibility of parents.

We live in a dangerous world with so many crimes committed against children. Parents of children who have cell phones must take specific steps to keep their children safe.

Make sure you have a relationship with your child so that they can come to you and talk openly about the things they encounter on the phone that make them feel scared or uncomfortable.

The "bark" is a parental control app that will monitor, detect issues and give you alerts. You are not invading your child's privacy, and you are parenting.





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